



City of Alexandria

Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting

November 18, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Council Workroom

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Chair Nathan Macek, Councilman Lovain, Scott Anderson, Jake Jakubek, Annika Moman, Jerry King, and Stephen Klejst

Commissioners Excused: Christine Michaelis and James Lewis

Commissioners Absent: Mayor William Euille

Staff Present: Karen Callahan - T&ES, Nathan Imm – P&Z, Lee Farmer – T&ES, Jason Kacamburas – DPI, Raymond Mui – Alexandria Transit Company, Carrie Sanders - T&ES, Patrick Reed - T&ES, Ramond Robinson - T&ES, Steve Sindiong -T&ES

Chair Nathan Macek called the Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

1. October 21, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Chair Nathan Macek asked if there were any changes to the October 21 minutes. He proposed striking “*the FY 2017 budget is a ten year budget*” in item 5. Chair Macek also proposed stating in item 5 that “Commission.....maintaining the same *general* recommendation, and not “*maintained the same recommendation*”.

Commissioner Klejst made a motion to approve the October 21, 2015 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Jakubek seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved by the Commission.

2. Updates to Receive (Consent Items)

The Commission received funding updates for the following ongoing projects: the King Street Metrorail Station; the Alexandria Transit Development Plan; the Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station; the Eisenhower Avenue widening; the King Street / Beauregard Street Improvement; the West End Transitway; and the Victory / TSA Transportation Management and Improvement.

Commissioner King inquired as to why the Old Cameron Run project is slated to receive \$6,000,000 under HB2 funding and \$2,100,000 under CMAQ funding. T&ES Acting Deputy Director of Transportation Carrie Sanders replied one reason is because the project received a

reduction in last year's budget. The second reason is right-of-way and survey research performed recently revealed an ample amount of private property must be purchased to complete the project. Lastly, a bridge will be required to be built across Hoof's Run and that will involve utility conflicts.

Chair Macek announced a federal court judge has voided the lease of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) headquarters moving to the Victory Center. He questioned how the planned transportation management improvements to mitigate some congestion that would have resulted from the TSA moving into the Victory Center site affect the Eisenhower West Small Area plan. Carrie Sanders stated that the majority of near term transportation improvements associated with TSA are being addressed through the DSUP conditions for the Victory Center site.

3. Commission Updates

Commissioner Jakubek announced the next meeting of the West End Transitway Policy Advisory Group will be December 3, 2015 from 6:30 – 9:00 pm at the Pavilion at Mark Center.

Commissioner Jakubek also gave an overview of the Envision Route 7 meeting. The development of a connected transit system along Route 7 from King Street Metrorail station or Van Dorn Metrorail station to Tysons Corner is the project's goal. During the current phase, public input is being sought, alternatives are being analyzed, and financial sustainability is being examined.

Chair Macek stated that the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan was adopted by City Council on November 14, 2015. Chair Macek also announced that there is a small area plan process being kicked off for Old Town North at 44 Canal Center Plaza on the 4th floor. The City will be hosting a week long visioning session (charrette) with three public evening meetings. The charrette provides a forum for citizens, designers, and others to share their vision and ideas through a variety of onsite and online collaborations. The outcome will be the overall framework of the small area plan. T&ES Acting Deputy Director Carrie Sanders added in addition to the three evening meetings, there are also two open houses that begin earlier in the day.

Councilman Lovain reported the 50th anniversary celebration of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) was held at its November 18 meeting. It was an opportunity to look back at the Board's role in making the region's transportation system what it is today. It was also an opportunity to look ahead to the future and what the next half-century might bring. During the monthly meeting there were a series of briefings on Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's (WMATA) financial and strategic plans. There was also a discussion on TPB's policies and how it is able to exert its authority on the types of projects that are approved. The process of scoring projects was discussed. The role of the TPB during planning is to review the regional system as a whole and how all the components work together.

4. RSTP/CMAQ Request - Public Hearing

T&ES Acting Deputy Director of Transportation Carrie Sanders stated the Transportation Commission is charged with oversight of the implementation of the transportation chapter of the City's adopted Master Plan. In that plan are funding needs that are met through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP). Each year staff brings recommendations to the Commission to hold a public hearing and develop funding recommendations for City Council consideration and approval.

T&ES staff Patrick Reed gave an overview of how the State allocates funding of CMAQ and RSTP funding to the Northern Virginia region. He stated CMAQ funds are allocated to metropolitan regions that do not meet Clean Air Act regulations. These funds must be used for activities that improve air quality and cannot be used to increase the capacity of roadways. RSTP funds are very flexible and can be used for a wide range of regional transportation activities. Northern Virginia

Transportation Authority (NVTa) bundles these two funding streams together to increase its ability to fund more projects. The City typically receives a larger share of CMAQ funding. For FY 2022, the City's proposed transportation projects total \$4,000,000, which is comparable to the amounts received in prior years. Mr. Reed gave a timeline of the process stating the City must submit its FY 2022 CMAQ and RSTP funding request to NVTa by December 16, 2015. NVTa makes its funding determinations in spring 2016.

After the staff presentation and discussion among the Commissioners, a public hearing was opened. Mr. Bob Gronenberg of 1717 Preston Road in Park Fairfax stated he doesn't believe it is a good investment to spend \$1,000,000 on a new electronic payment program. He suggested that the money be spent on GPS tracking or new buses. DASH staff Raymond Mui responded that DASH already has a GPS project that is fully funded and will start up in spring 2016. The smart trip technology system is reaching its end of life in a few years. He indicated WMATA is on board with the region to replace the smart trip system and the support for fare boxes that support only smart trip capability has been pulled.

After the public hearing was closed, Commissioner Jake Jakubek made a motion to endorse the staff's FY 2022 CMAQ and RSTP recommendation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klejst, voted on and unanimously approved.

5. WMATA Funding

Transit Services Division Chief Ramond Robinson gave an update of WMATA's FY 2017 budget.

The challenges facing WMATA include increased telecommuting and more options for trip-making such as bikeshare and car-sharing services; concerns over fare pricing, the reduction in the federal transit benefit, low gasoline prices, the relatively high daily cost of longer park-and-ride trips; and concerns by customers over service quality and reliability.

WMATA's top priorities are the safety and security of customers and employees. Their goal is to upgrade the radio system and ensure wireless availability by addressing the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations, and implementing the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Safety Management Inspection (SMI) requirements.

Another priority is customer service initiatives to regain the trust and satisfaction of current customers and to draw new customers to the system. WMATA intends to focus on capital investments such as Transit Signal Priority, complementary fare policy changes that would lead to faster Metro bus service, better Metrorail pass products to encourage ridership, generate incremental revenue, and continued delivery of the new 7000 Series railcars during FY2017.

Efficiency enhancements are also a priority. In order to reduce costs, bring expense growth in line with expected revenues, and reduce jurisdictional subsidy requirements, WMATA will implement further administrative staff and expense reductions. In addition to the reductions implemented in FY2016, WMATA proposes to implement the findings of the recently initiated Board efficiency work plan and take steps to maximize non-fare revenues such as advertising and concessions.

There are four options being presented for WMATA's FY2017 operating budget. A "zero subsidy growth option" will keep the jurisdictional subsidy contribution at the same level as FY2016. A "no change to fares or service" option will result in a 10 percent increase in jurisdictional subsidy. To limit the increase in jurisdictional subsidy to 3 percent over FY2016, a substantial fare increase and a combination of a smaller fare increase and targeted service reductions would limit the need for an increased subsidy from jurisdictions.

WMATA's six year capital proposal consists of three funding options. They are aiming at a CIP funding of approximately \$6 billion to support ongoing required investments in safety and state of good repair at current funding levels. In addition to \$7 billion for an increased investment in currently deferred projects. To further reduce investment backlog and allow WMATA to begin planning for future enhancements, \$8 billion would be needed.

WMATA will present their budget proposal to the jurisdictions in December. In January, they will submit their capital program for review. From January through March, WMATA's Board will have budget discussions and perform outreach to the public and stakeholders. In April, the budget will be adopted and executed for a renewed Capital Funding Agreement.

6. Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS Funding

Acting Deputy Director of T&ES Carrie Sanders gave an overview of the project. She indicated the City, WMATA, the National Park Service (NPS), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are working to complete the Final EIS while concurrently beginning the development of a conceptual design for inclusion in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for design and construction of the station. The final EIS will be circulated for public review early next year and followed by a Record of Decision (ROD) from NPS and the FTA.

T&ES Project Manager Lee Farmer gave an overview of the design process, which will include a series of meetings to solicit public input, as well as regular updates to City boards and commissions and City Council. She specified WMATA plans to issue the RFP for a design-build contract in summer 2016. WMATA and the City will be developing the set of standards, requirements, expectations, and conceptual design that the contractors will use to develop their bids. The goal is development of a conceptual design that has buy-in from residents, can be recommended for approval by relevant boards and commissions, and can be approved by City Council, the NPS, WMATA, and other approving agencies.

Ms. Farmer also reported on the October 28, 2015 Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Work Group (PYMIG) meeting which was used to discuss station and park design. Members of PYMIG and the public provided feedback on principles and strategies to guide the design of the station and on elements that they would like to see included. The meeting was supplemented by a survey with the same general questions asked on AlexEngage that was available through November 8.

During the meeting, a design principles exercise asked the participants to indicate the degree of importance they would assign to each of four principles. The principles are appearance, context, environment and access. Participants voted "access" as the most important design principle for the station. "Appearance" and "context" were also considered to be very important design principles. The design strategies exercise also asked participants to choose strategies to guide the selection of style, form, and materials for the station. The participants supported a well-lit structure. They also expressed a preference for a curvilinear form; however, a significant proportion preferred a geometric form. Participants were fairly evenly split between a building that looks like a single facility or reads as multiple components.

Participants were asked to indicate the uses they would like to see in each park. The preferred uses for Potomac Greens Park focused on walking trails and boardwalks through the wetlands, as well as picnic benches and other spots for passive recreation. The preferred uses for Potomac Yard Park were more active, including bicycle and multiuse trails and event spaces.

Ms. Farmer reported that the next PYMIG meeting will be on December 14, 2015. The agenda will focus on massing concepts for the station and design concepts for Potomac Greens Park.

7. Other Business

Chair Macek reported that he and Commissioner King participated in a meeting with the City's Director of T&ES, Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors, the Environmental Policy Commission and the Traffic and Parking Board to get a sense of the budget priorities of each of the groups for the coming year. He recounted that he and Commissioner King reiterated the budget guidance to the group that had been provided to Council. They also suggested what T&ES Director Yon Lambert and T&ES staff could do to help address budget concerns and give meaningful feedback to the Transportation Commission going forward. Chair Macek indicated it was valuable to see the perspective of each of the other Boards and Commissions.

Commissioner King added at the meeting T&ES Director Yon Lambert asked if the Transportation Commission was asked to give up 5% from the budget, what would it be? Commissioner King asked if the Commissioners wanted to entertain discussions on that question. Chair Macek replied that discussion should be delayed until more information on the budget is received by the Commission. He suggested that staff should come back to the Commission with options prior to having the Commission make a final recommendation.

Chair Macek announced he will be participating in a panel with Agenda Alexandria talking about the Old Town Area Parking Study and the parking standards for development that were adopted.

Chair Macek also announced staff decided he will stay as Chair of the Commission until the January meeting where elections for the Chair and Vice Chair will be on the agenda.

Commissioner Jakubek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 pm. This motion was seconded by Commissioner King and unanimously approved by the Commission.